Common sounds

SOUND	NOISE LEVEL (dB)	EFFECT
BOOM CARS	145	
JET ENGINES (NEAR)	140	
SHOTGUN FIRING	130	
JET TAKEOFF (100-200 ft.)	130	
ROCK CONCERTS (Varies)	110-140	Threshold of pain (125 dB)
OXYGEN TORCH	121	
DISCOTHEQUE/BOOM BOX	120	Threshold of sensation (120 dB)
THUNDERCLAP (NEAR)	120	
STEREOS (OVER 100 WATTS)	110-125	
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA	110	
POWER SAW (CHAIN SAW)	110	Regular exposure of more than 1 min. risks permanent
PNEUMATIC DRILL/JACKHAMMER	110	hearing loss (over 100 dB)
SNOWMOBILE	105	
JET FLYOVER (1000 ft.)	103	
ELECTRIC FURNACE AREA	100	
GARBAGE TRUCK/CEMENT MIXER	100	No more than 15 min. unprotected exposure recommended
FARM TRACTOR	98	(90-100 dB)
NEWSPAPER PRESS	97	
SUBWAY, MOTORCYCLE (25 ft)	88	Very annoying
LAWNMOWER, FOOD BLENDER	85-90	Level at which hearing damage (8 hrs.) begins (85dB)
RECREATIONAL VEHICLES, TV	70-90	
DIESEL TRUCK (40 mph, 50 ft.)	84	
AVERAGE CITY TRAFFIC NOISE	80	Annoying; interferes with conversation; constant exposure
GARBAGE DISPOSAL	80	may cause damage
WASHING MACHINE	78	
DISHWASHER	75	
VACUUM CLEANER, HAIR DRYER	70	Intrusive; interferes with telephone conversation
NORMAL CONVERSATION	50-65	
QUIET OFFICE	50-60	Comfortable (under 60 dB)
REFRIGERATOR HUMMING	40	
WHISPER	30	Very quiet
BROADCASTING STUDIO		
RUSTLING LEAVES	20	Just audible
NORMAL BREATHING	10	
	0	Threshold of normal hearing (1000-4000 Hz)

Since the sensitivity of the ear to sound is not the same for all frequencies, weighting or attenuating filters are included in the sound level meter's circuits to simulate the ears' response. A noise level meter gives an instantaneous measurement of the noise present, but cannot measure the duration of the exposure. To measure the amount of noise a person is exposed to over a period of time, a "dosimeter" or an integrated sound level meter must be used. Sources for above include the American Medical Association and the Canadian Hearing Society of Ontario. Decibel table developed by the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, National Institutes of Health, Bethesda, Maryland 20892. January 1990.

THIS DECIBEL (dB) TABLE COMPARES SOME COMMON SOUNDS AND SHOWS HOW THEY RANK IN POTENTIAL HARM TO HEARING.

IN MANY INDUSTRIES, WORKERS ARE EXPOSED TO DANGEROUS NOISE LEVELS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE CONSTRUCTION, LUMBER, MINING, STEEL AND TEXTILE INDUSTRIES.